REMARKS

Claims 1-52 are pending in the application. Claims 20 and 24 have been amended, and claims 7-19, 23, 25-27, 35, 44, and 49 have been withdrawn pursuant to a restriction requirement. Further, Claims 1-6, 28-34, 36, 38-43, 45-48, and 50-52 have been allowed. No new matter has been introduced by the amendment.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 20-22, 24, and 37 have been rejected over Kopp. This rejection has been overcome in view of the amendment of claims 20 and 24 together with the following remarks.

Claim 20, as amended, recites a beverage selection manifold in which a removable cap that includes a channel is positionable adjacent to a cell within a manifold body. As previously described by the Applicants in their response of February 17, 2006, the channel within the cap permits fluid communication between the outlet opening and either the first or second inlet openings depending upon the position of the cap. In contrast, Kopp discloses a valve that is positionable between two locations and through which the fluid flows into a single tube having an outlet that constitutes a selector. In particular, Kopp discloses a valve in which an outlet nozzle (65) is part of a mixing device (69) that is movable between a first position and a second position.

The Applicants' claimed beverage selection manifold differs from Kopp because the switching device is a removable cap that includes a channel within the cap. Depending upon the position of the cap, fluid is directed from the manifold body through the channel within the cap and back into the manifold body. Further, the claimed embodiment of Applicants' beverage selection manifold includes a dispensing outlet opening located in the manifold body, not in the selecting device. Accordingly, the Applicant's removable cap is designed to form different fluid paths through the cap depending upon the cap position.

In contrast, Kopp merely selects one of two fluid inlets and directs fluid through an outlet opening that is integral with the selection device. Accordingly, the device

disclosed by Kopp does not construct separate fluid pathways through which fluid is returned to the manifold body prior to flowing to an outlet opening.

Claims 21 and 22 each depend from claim 20 and are allowable in view of the amendment and remarks pertaining to claim 20.

Claim 24, as amended, recites a method in which a user positions a cap to control fluid flow from first and second fluid supply lines that are located in a manifold body. Claim 24 also recites that the positioning of the cap allows fluid to flow through the cap and into a fluid outlet line in the manifold body. The fluid outlet line is coupled to the recited dispensing valve.

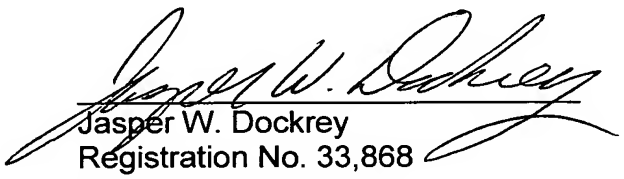
The Applicants respectfully assert that Kopp does not suggest or disclose the method recited by claim 24. In particular, Kopp fails to suggest or disclose fluid flow through a cap from a fluid supply line located in a manifold body and into a fluid outlet line located in the manifold body. As discussed by the Applicants in their previous response of February 17, 2006, claim 24 recites a cap having a first side and a second side. Depending upon the position of the cap, fluid is blocked by either the first side or second side of the cap. Kopp, on the other hand, discloses a rotatable valve in which fluid is allowed to flow through either a cold water line (84) or a hot water line (86). If the mixing device (69) of Kopp is equivalent to the Applicants' claimed cap, as asserted in the instant Office Action, then the mixing device has only one side that closes a fluid supply line, not two sides. The Applicants assert that the channel within the cap defines separate fluid pathways and that the cap is configured to block fluid flow from a first side and a second side. Accordingly, the method of claim 24 is patentably distinct from the method of valve operation disclosed by Kopp.

Claim 37 distinguishes over Kopp in view of the recited beverage selection manifold that includes a section within a manifold body including first and second outlet openings and first and second inlet openings. The Applicants respectfully assert that Kopp fails to suggest or disclose a section of a manifold body including first and second outlet openings and first and second inlet openings. To the extent that the nozzle assembly (61) of Kopp could be construed to include a manifold body section, the valve assembly of Kopp has only a single outlet opening: the nozzle mouth (67). Accordingly, the beverage selection manifold recited by claim 37 significantly differs from the valve

assembly disclosed by Kopp. Kopp completely lacks any structure that will create a fluid path for a first outlet opening in one position and for a second outlet opening in a different position.

The applicants have a novel and non-obvious contribution to the art of beverage selection manifold design and operation. The claims at issue distinguish over the cited reference and are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, such allowance is now earnestly requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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